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ABSTRACT

This study, which focused on the social behavior of 4-year-old children toward peers and adults, investigated relationships of 54 children in California and Japan who were observed for 20 minutes while they were playing in preschool or day care. All their behaviors during the first 30 seconds were observed and written down during the second 30 seconds, and behaviors related to peers and adults were classified according to psychological distance. Results indicated that: (1) the children played beside peers, joining psychologically into peer groups; (2) Japanese children exhibited more one-way behavior with no response, while American children exhibited more group behavior; (3) day care children exhibited more one-way behavior, whereas preschool children exhibited more sympathetic behavior; (4) there were few sex differences in interaction behavior; (5) Japanese children initiated more behavior toward adults, while adults initiated more interactions with the American children; (6) one-way behavior decreased with age for all children, although individual behavior remained high; and (7) American children related more freely to other children and were more advanced in relationship formation than were Japanese children. (Author/SKC)

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DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN FOUR-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

Comparative Study Between The U.S. And Japan

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ABSTRACT

The focus of the study is on an analysis of the social behavior of the children toward peers and adults. 54 four-year-old children (72 through 80 month old) in California and in Japan each were observed for twenty minutes while they were playing in preschool or in daycare. All their behaviors in the first 30 seconds were observed and written down during the second 30 seconds by an observer. The behaviors related to peers were classified into ten levels (a' to e) according to the psychological distance between peers. The behaviors related to adults were also classified according as how they contacted with adults. The results are: 1) Four-year-old children mostly play beside peers, joinning psychologically in peer groups; They play sympathetically together or interact each other; Also they are developing the behavior as a member of guoup. 2) The differences between the U.S. and Japan are: Oneway behavior which does not get any responce from the other children is high in Japan; Behavior as a member in a group is high in the U.S. 3) The differences between preschoolers and daycare children are: Oneway behavior is high in the daycare children; sympathetic behavior is high in the preschoolers in both countries. 4) The differences between boys and girls are small: Sympathetic behavior is high in the boys in the U.S.; Observational behavior is high in the girls in Japan. 5) The behavior related to adults and especially which is initiated by children is high Japan; The behavior to children initiated by adults is high in the U.S. 6) Oneway behavior is getting low from 72 through 80 month old, but individual behavior among other children is still high at this age in both countries. 7) American four-year-old children relate much to other children and they are more advanced in making relationship with each other than Japanese children.

INTRODUCTION

How do young children develop their social behaviors toward other children? How do they participate and engage in the plays with peers? Is there any differences in participating in others between American and Japanese children?

Parten M.B.(1932-34) had set up the six categories according to the degree of participation: unoccupied, solitary, onlooker, parallel, associative and organized supplementary play which indicated the developmental stage of social behaviors among peers. We noticed not only the behaviors which can be seen by others but the psychological distance between children: what the meaning of the existance of other children is to them, how much they concern about other children, how they participate in or interact each other and how they intend or understand others in getting along with.

The degree of participation does not progress or change straightly with age but also with the charactor of the child or the situation of the play. A child plays some alone, joins in or with others and behaves as a group member, taking an appropriate, psychological distance between peers.

There are some more stages between the onlooker and the organized play set by Parten; Observe or approach to other's play, play among others, try to contact with others, play together sympathetically, interact with understanding, go along with/reject other's intention and lead, according to the depth of children's psychological participation and the developmental stage.

Social behaviors develop along the development of "ego". The social skill helps a child to participate in others. Sometimes, a child needs to come back to himself or engage in his own play, also to concern about adults and get their supports, even he or she is among other children.

PROCEDURE

Subjects

Each 54 four-year-old children in preschool or daycare in southern California and in Yokohama, Japan. The number and the age of the subjects are matched as below.

	Japan; boy 26 girl 28		U.S.A.; boy 22 girl 32		
Month	Preschool	Daycare	Preschool	Daycare	Total
72 ∫ 80	each 3 x9	each 3 x9	each 3 x9	each 3 x9	each 12 x 9
Total	27	27	27	27	108

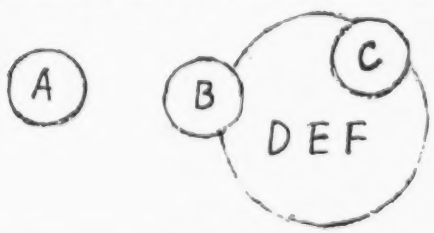
Observation

Each child was observed for twenty minutes mainly at the free play hour in preschool or in daycare. All their behaviors in the first 30 seconds were observed and written down during the second 30 seconds by an observer.

Classification of the behaviors

Children's all behaviors were classified into two groups. One consists of the behaviors related to adults, the other, of other behaviors. The other behaviors were classified by the degree of participation including the psychological distance with other children or peer groups. That is, from being separate from peer group (a') to behaving as a group member or a leader (e', e).

Psychological distance between one and the others



A. being separate
B. stay around
C. stay among
D. join in
E. as a group
F. form a group

Peer group (more than two)

CLASSIFICATION BY THE DEGREE OF PARETIFICATION IN OTHER CHILDREN

A.Hitsuda, M.Ishimine, H.Asano 1986

Psychological distance	Category	The state
A Being separate	a' Unoccupied	neither participate in nor concern about other children
	a Solitary	
B Stay around	b' Looking on	not participate in but concern about other children
	b observational	
C Stay among	c' Indivisual	stay among peers but not participate in
	c Oneway	talk to others without care, try to contact others.
D Join in with	d' Sympathetic	play together, feel sympathy with each other
	d Interactive	respond each other exchange, do together with understanding
E As a group	e' As a member	go along with or reject other's intention with understanding
	e As a leader	turn the direction of play, mediate the members
F Form a group	f' Cooperative	cooperate each other for a common goal
	f Integrated	integrate the talent of each other

Sample of behavior

idle walking, vacant looking
leave, play alone
look on
observe, approach
play the same play to other's, talk to oneself, cheers
talk to others, bother, watch
frisk, imitate, run after each other
talk to - answer, quarrel, ask a help - help, borrow back and forth
aid, agree (reject), follow (reject) the direction of others, play according to rules
propose, direct, bring in a new play, idea or rule

RESULTS

(1) The participation in other children

Percentage of behaviors (4:0 throuth 4:8)

Fig. 1 —— Japan
---- U.S.A.

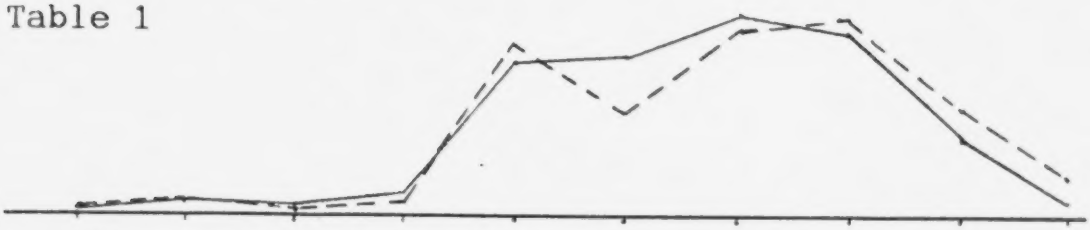


Table 1

	a'	a	b'	b	c'	c	d'	d	e'	e
J.	0.2	1.7	1.1	2.9	18 0	19.0***	24.4	21.7	9.3	1.8
A.	0.3	1.7	0.5	1.4	20.3	12.6	22.1	23.8	12.8**	4.5***

Table 2

Age	4:0--4:2		4:3--4:5		4:6--4:8	
	Japan	U.S.A.	Japan	U.S.A.	Japan	U.S.A.
a'	0.5	0.8	-	0.3	-	-
a	2.3	3.8	-	0.3	2.8(*)	1.0
b'	2.0*	0.3	-	0.5	1.3	0.8
b	5.8*	2.5	0.5	-	2.3	1.6
c'	13.4	**21.6	19.6	19.0	21.0	20.3
c	21.7**	13.0	19.4	16.5	15.9**	8.1
d'	22.2	21.9	27.9	27.3	23.0*	16.9
d	22.0	22.1	25.3	23.1	18.0	***26.2
e'	9.3	10.4	5.9	7.8	12.4	**20.5
e	0.8	**3.6	1.3	**5.3	3.3	4.7

***P<. 001 **P<.01 *P<.05 (*) P<.10

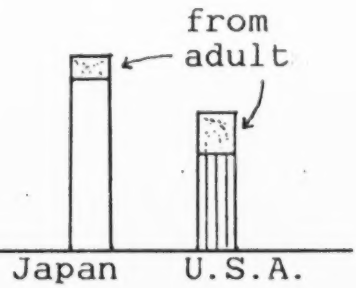
(2) School differences, Fig. 2, Table 3
Oneway behavior is high in the daycare children and sympathetic behavior is high in the preschoolers in both countries. Moreover the preschoolers showed higher percentage of interactive behavior in the U.S., and of behavior as a member in Japan than the daycare children.

(3) Sex differences, Fig. 3, Table 4
Sex differences are small in both countries. The boys join in the peers sympathetically more than the girls in the U.S. The girls stay around and observe others more than the boys in Japan.

(4) Behaviors related to adults

Persentage of behaviors

	Japan	U.S.A.
From child	20.7***	11.6
oneway	15.7***	8.8
got responce	5.0*	3.5
From adult	2.6	**5.0
Total	23.3***	16.6



About twenty percents of four-year-old children's behavior is concerned in adults while they are engaging in a play with other children. They need cares from adults and it is important and necessary for children to get the supports even when they participate or get along with peers.

Japanese children are concerned in adults more than the American children. They look, speak and ask the teacher or another adults. But Japanese adults care or respond to children less than the American adults. The reason why Japanese teachers do not care the children as much as the American teachers is that Japanese teachers are too busy to answer the children, for they take care of three times as many children as American teachers do.

Table 3 School differences

	Japan		U.S.A.	
	preschool	daycare	preschool	daycare
a'	-	0.3	0.5	0.2
a	1.4	2.0	1.0	(*)2.4
b'	0.8	1.4	0.3	0.7
b	3.6	2.2	1.2	1.5
c'	12.9	***23.1	19.6	21.0
c	16.9	***21.1	9.3	**15.9
d'	28.3**	20.4	24.4(*)	19.8
d	21.2	22.3	27.1*	20.5
e'	13.7***	4.8	11.5	14.2
e	1.2	2.4	5.1	3.9

Table 4 Sex differences

	Japan		U.S.A.	
	boy	girl	boy	girl
a'	-	0.3	-	0.6
a	1.1	2.3	1.0	2.1
b'	0.9	1.3	0.8	0.3
b	1.8	*3.9	1.3	1.4
c'	17.0	18.9	20.7	20.1
c	20.9	17.2	10.9	13.8
d'	26.2	22.7	25.1*	20.1
d	20.6	22.8	23.8	23.7
e'	10.2	8.4	11.5	13.8
e	1.4	2.1	5.0	4.2

***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05 (*)p<.10

Fig. 2 School differences

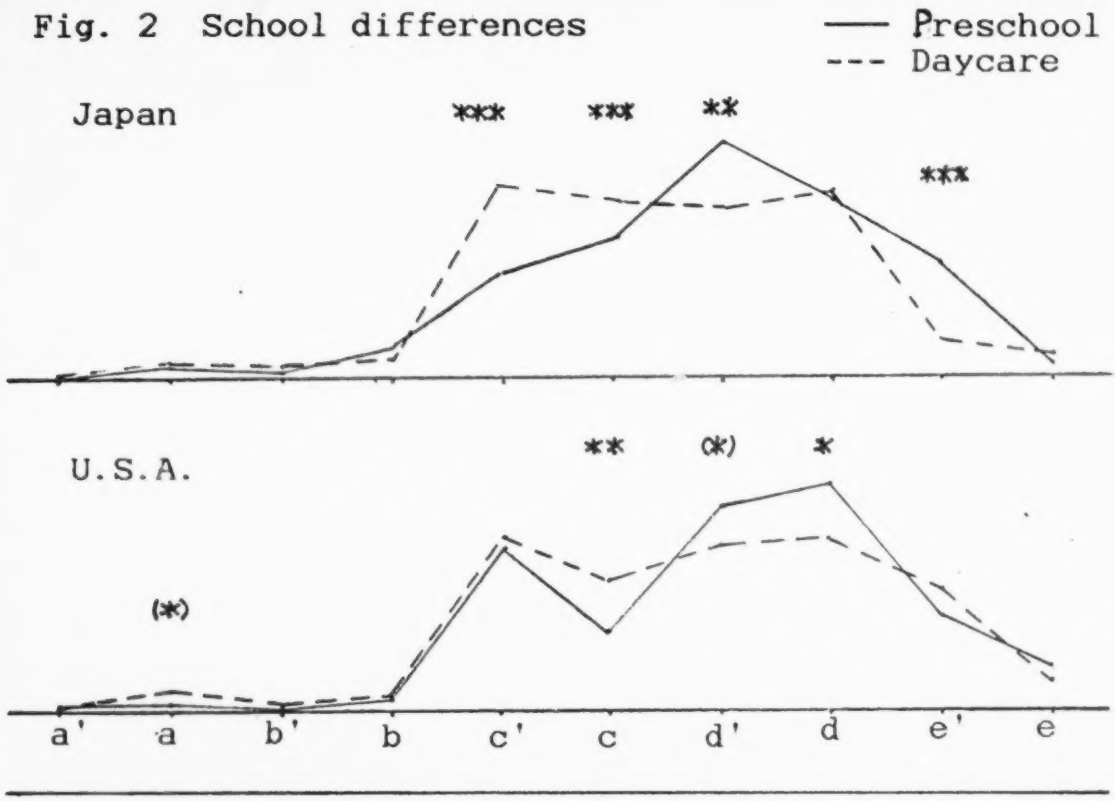
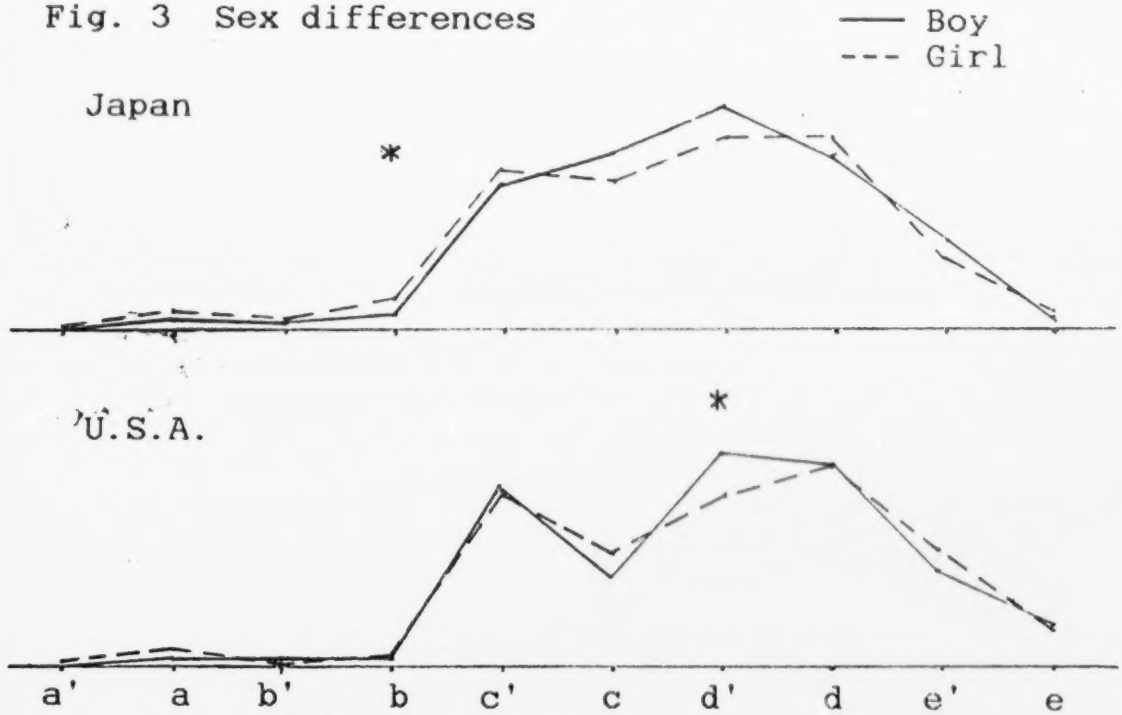


Fig. 3 Sex differences



***P<.001 **P<.01 *P<.05 (*)P<.10

CONCLUSION

1. Four-year-old children stay together, joining psychologically in peer groups. They play some alone and talk or try to contact other children without getting any responces from them. This oneway behavior decreases but the indivisual play in a peer group keeps to emerge about the same percentage through four year age and it is supporsed to emerge continuously in five-year-olds, for it is important behavior as an explorative or selfcomplete activity even he or she is in a peer group.

2. Mostly four-year-old children join in or with peer groups, playing sympathetically together, responding, interacting or quarreling each other. Moreover they are developing social behavior by going together or leading some with understanding of each other's intention.

3. The preschoolers are more positively than the daycare children and the boys are rather active than the girls in participating in peers in both countries.

4. The Japanese children talk and try to be concerned with the others in one-sided way more than the American children, besides the American children play some alone in a group but they participate more than the Japanese children by joining in, going along or leading others.

5. Japanese children play together concerning with others even in one-sided way emotionally rather than to be skilled in making relationship with each other. They play with and care about teachers who play with the children at play hour.

6. American children are advanced in the social skill to interact, go along with and lead each other. Sometimes they play alone independently. They play themselves without caring about teachers who just keep to watch the children at free play hour.

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